

Young Moroccans: profile, expectations and perceptions

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To understand the perceptions of young Moroccans, their needs, their priorities, their worries and their relationship with the institutions, a study was conducted in 2011 by the High Commission of Planning (HCP). It concerned a sample of 5.000 young people. This paper presents the principal insights issued from this study. High levels of celibacy are registered among these young people, in spite of their perceptions regarding the marriage as being a value of family stability. Generally devoid of sources of income, they are numerous to seek help and cover from their families, as two out of three young people are still living under the wing of their parents and have rather good relationships with them. When there is disagreement with parents, it is due to the schooling, the leaving home, the choice of friends and the respect of the religion and the traditions. Regarding their civic implications and commitments, the young Moroccans have a lack of interest for the public affairs. Even if their participation in the elections registered the mean levels as voters, their adhesion and activism within the political or social organizations remain low even insignificant. The needs priorities of the young Moroccans are employment, education, housing and health. The high cost of living, unemployment and dwindling resources constitute the principal worries in the future. About leisure, watching television or listening to the radio are the most important activities of the young Moroccans. The internet constitutes, for them, a support of communication solicited more and more in particular to communicate via the social networks. Concerning the access to the information and national news, these young use at first the national audio-visual means. The reading and practice of sport are slightly present in their daily life.

Key Words: Civic implications, family solidarity, marriage, priorities, relationship with institutions.

1. Introduction

In Morocco, the young people represent a social component whose demographic weight and economic and social expectations are constantly growing. To apprehend the various aspects related to the situation of the young Moroccans as well as their behaviors and perceptions, the High Commission of Planning (HCP) conducted a survey in 2011 among a sample of 5000 young people representative of the various areas and social strata of the country. The strength of this investigation, which is part of a trend aiming at further developing the qualitative studies among the various components of the Moroccan society, is that it allows apprehending (the young Moroccans' behaviors, perceptions and attitudes regarding a vast range of issues related to their living conditions as well as their socio-economic and cultural situations.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first one provides a brief presentation of the young Moroccans aged 18 to 34 years demographic profile. The second section addresses their relationships with their family environment, their perceptions of marriage, and their relationship with the political and social institutions in the country. The last part focuses on the youth expectations, concerns and worries about the future.

2. A socio-demographic portrait of the young people in Morocco

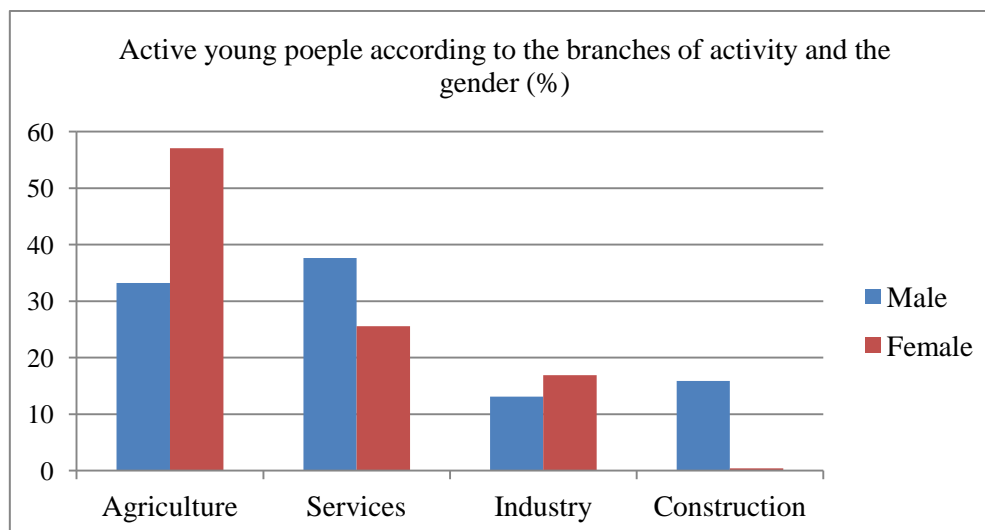
In 2011, the population aged 18 to 34 consisted of 9.7 million people, including 51.3% female against 48.7% male. 57.7% of them lived in urban areas and 42.3% were established in rural areas.

This population has relatively low levels of education. Indeed, almost one in four young people have no educational level. This phenomenon affects young women (35.4%) more than young men (15.3%), especially those living in rural areas (57.6%) compared with their urban counterparts (18.7%). In addition, 64.4% of young people aged 18 to 34 have a medium-level of education (75.6% for men and 53.9% for women), whereas the proportion of young Moroccans having a higher level of education accounts for only 9% (14.3% in urban areas and 1.4% in rural areas).

The same finding is registered concerning the possession of diplomas. Indeed, almost one in two young people (49%) have no diploma, 42% have a secondary education certificate and only 9% have a higher diploma.

As regards the activity, slightly more than one in two (53.7%) is active. Male participation in the workforce is estimated to be 88%, compared with female participation rate of 27,4%. In terms of place of residence, young people in urban areas have a participation rate of 49% while the activity rate of their rural counterparts is 60.1%.

The economic activities which engage young Moroccans are primarily agriculture, forestry and fishing (39.2%) followed by trade and services (34.6%), industry (14.1%) and finally, the construction of buildings and infrastructure projects (12%).



Regarding the practiced occupations, the findings show that the majority of the 18 to 34 age group working population are blue-collar workers (53.4%). 20.3% are craftsmen or skilled workers in the handcraft trade and 12.6% work as merchants. The proportion of middle executives is estimated to only 12.4% whereas senior officers and line managers represent 1,2%.

The most dominant status is wage-earning. Indeed, 47% of young workers are employees with a proportion of men (50%) higher than that of women (38%). The rural young people work mainly as unpaid family workers (52%), whereas their urban

counterparts start developing the concept of self employment, since 26% of them work in jobs which they created themselves.

The percentage of job seekers is very important within the population studied, as 15% of young labour force aged 18 to 34 are unemployed. This problem affects much more women (18.1%) than men (14%) and mostly young holders of diplomas. The unemployment rate increased by 6.1% among young people with no qualifications to 35.4% among those with a higher degree through 20.7% for those with average level.

3. Young Moroccans perception of the relationship with parents

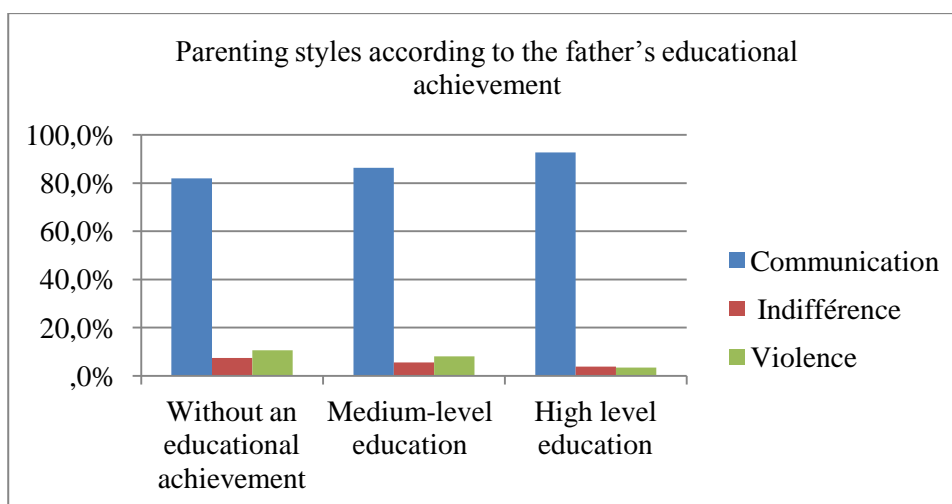
The low qualifications and unemployment lead young Moroccans to seek shelter with their families. The results of the study reveal two lifestyles among the young Moroccans: living with parents, a situation which affects about two-thirds of them (67%) (especially men with 83% against 52% for women), or living in his own little family, mode adopted by 28.4% mainly young women with a share of 42% against 13.5% for men.

Living with parents in the same environment is a cause of different social relations. According to the survey results, young Moroccans have generally positive perceptions of the relationship that ties them to their home environment, in particular with parents. The persons interviewed consider that living with parents provides them a lot of benefits, including stability and family solidarity (77%), security (8.3%), housing (6%), and finally saving possibility (3%). However, 27% of young Moroccans consider that living with parents presents some inconveniences especially related to sometimes difficult relationships with parents (9.6%), tense and conflicting relationships with parents-in-laws (6%), and finally the constraints that could restrict their liberties (8.3%).

The majority of young Moroccans (91%), both men and women, have a good relationship with their parents, 7% of them estimate that their relationship with parents is unstable, sometimes good sometimes bad, while a small minority (about 2%) considers this relationship complicated and conflictual.

When some divergence takes place between parents and children, it is mostly about education, particularly for boys (54%), while it mainly concerns the home leaving for girls (42%), choice of friends (both male and female) for girls (40%), respect for the religion and traditions (34%), and the achievement of household tasks (33%).

According to the respondents, the parenting styles are primarily based on the values of communication and orientation (84%). The results of the survey show up a certain influence of the parental educational achievement, especially the father's level, on the style adopted for children's education. The proportion of young people parents' who use communication is about 75% among interviewees brought up by a father who has attained no educational achievement against 93% for those whose father has a higher level of education. These proportions are respectively 83% and 90%, according to the mother's grade level.



Furthermore, only 9.4% of young people believe that the parenting style adopted by their parents is based on violence. This trend declines gradually as the parental educational achievement increases. Thus, the proportion of interviewees who gave this answer is estimated to 10,6% for those brought up by a father with no school level. It's of 3.4% for those with a father having a higher school level. These proportions are respectively 9.8% and 5.9% when it comes to the mother's educational achievement.

The main reason that leads young people to leave the parental home for the first time is to get married (64.3%), particularly for girls (87%). For men, the main reason is related to job search or working requirements.

4. Young Moroccans and marriage

In general, young Moroccans perceive marriage positively. Two out of three of them (67.7%) view it as a source of family stability and three out of ten (29.4%) regard it as a religious duty aiming at completing their religion. According to these young people the ideal age to marry is 24 years, 22 years according to the female respondents and 26 years for those of male sex. Despite their generally positive attitudes towards marriage, 44.2% of young Moroccans do not think about it at the time of the survey, 52.7% of men against 32.6% of women. This can be explained by economic reasons related to their adverse financial conditions (36%).

For a successful marriage, the majority of young Moroccans attach great importance to considerations of economic order such as the possession of a sufficient income and home ownership (85.4%), to cultural considerations like partners' mutual faithfulness (91.3%) and to the need to have children (80.7%). Furthermore, approximately one young Moroccan on three (32%) consider that partners belonging to the same social layer or having the same level of education are two additional main factors which contribute to the success of marriage.

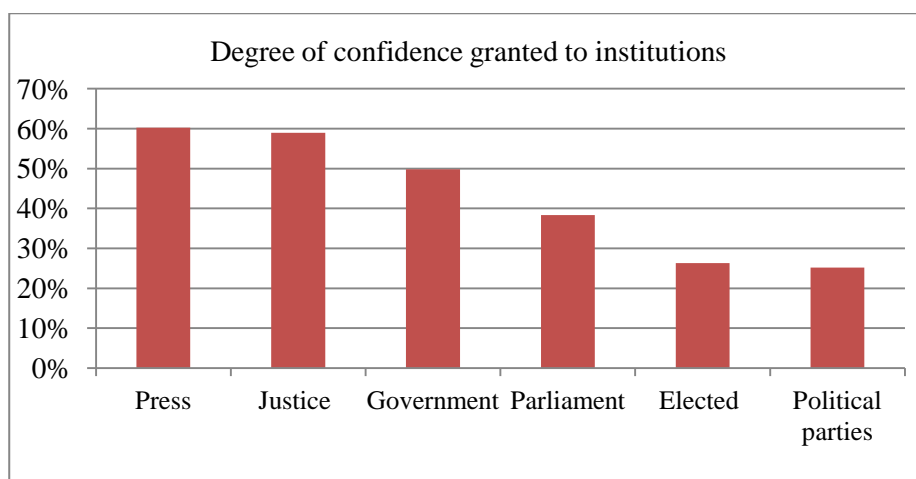
Asked about the Moudaouana, the Moroccan Personal Status Code promulgated in 2004 to improve women condition among other things, youth perceptions are more or less mitigated. Approximately one young person on two believes that it has contributed, in particular, to the decline in the marriage rate and to the increase of divorce levels.

5. Political and civic commitments of young Moroccans

According to the survey results, it seems that the political activities and those of civil society are of little interest for young Moroccans. Only their participation in legislative elections as well as in communal and local ones records an average score of around 40% with a slight advantage for men who contribute with a proportion of 44% against 37% for young women. Voluntary service activities interest only 8.4% (12% of young male against 5 % of young women) while their participation in strikes and social claims is only about 4%. Their membership in non-governmental organizations is estimated to 2.9 %.

However, the participation of young Moroccans as members or activists within political parties and trade union representatives records insignificant levels of 0.7%.

Concerning their relationship with national institutions, 60.2% of young Moroccans aged 18 to 34 put faith in the press; in justice with 60%; they trust the government with 50% and the parliament with 38%. By contrast, elected officials and political parties are the least-reported (26.3% and 25.2% respectively).



In spite of these septic trends, 54% of young Moroccans consider that the democratic process in the country has improved significantly, 24% consider it stagnant while 17% deplores the gradual deterioration of this process.

6. Expectations and concerns of young Moroccans

The survey results confirm the already known priority needs of young people namely: employment, education, training and housing. Indeed, 96% of young people aged 18 to 34 consider that the possession of a stable work and equal opportunities to reach it, is a paramount need. The reform of education and training comes in the second position with 83.3% and in third position the access to the housing expressed by 81% of interviewed young people.

Other equally important needs are identified, such as improvement of health services put forward by 75% of the respondents and the availability of cultural, sporting and entertaining infrastructures by 64%.

The issues that are most of concern to the young Moroccans, when speaking about the future, are mainly the life requirements which are increasingly expensive in their opinion (83%), the youth unemployment (79, 4 %) and the income decline 77%.

7. Conclusion

As conclusion, it is necessary to underline at first the innovative character of this kind of qualitative surveys more and more envisaged by the HCP in order to clarify the qualitative aspects related to the behaviors, attitudes, and aspirations of different fragments of Moroccan society, especially young people.

In spite of the efforts made during the last decades to improve their living conditions, the results of this study shows that these young people present the low levels of education and training which makes their insertion in the labor market difficult and plunges them in a great professional precariousness.

In terms of values, the perceptions of young Moroccans are rather positive. It denotes their great attachment to the family institution, which for them is an important source of safety, an environment of solidarity and good relationships with parents. For these young people, marriage is perceived as being a value of stability and social blooming

Despite many efforts to improve the conditions of political and civic participation of young Moroccans, they continue to show less interest in commitment and adherence to the political life of the country that they consider knowing a marked improvement in terms of the democratic process.

Concerning the priorities of the young Moroccans, the study confirms the already known needs to know employment, education-training and housing. Their concerns in the future are the high cost of living, the unemployment and the lack of financial resources.

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